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## **Bachelor thesis in Monsters and Monstrosity**

**Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep and Blade Runners?**

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- Tore Westre

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# Abstract

The thesis is “How are the androids depicted in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* versus in *Blade Runner*, and what effect does it have on the theme of empathy and humanity in the two versions?”.

This thesis explores how androids are depicted in Philip K. Dick’s science fiction novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and explores the boundaries between humans and androids. As well as looking at how the film adaptation: *Blade Runner* approaches the theme of humanity and empathy, how it depicts the androids and how it differs from the novel. The text will approach changes and differences, and how they have affected the story, as well as how they address the themes differently. Furthermore, delving into the question of why the changes were made with the use of literature on adaptation and monster theory.

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# 1. Introduction

“If you can make a fake seem authentic enough, does it matter?”

(Dick, 2010)

We live in a world with technology advancing so fast and branching out in all sectors. Even our species is advancing. Robotics and genetic engineering are well on their way and with it human-like robots, also known as androids. This fast-paced advancement in technology has resulted in numerous sci-fi novels and Hollywood films, where they envision a dystopic future where the androids will overthrow us (Asma, 2009, p. 257). This imagined scenario raises many interesting questions about free will and slavery. It builds upon the fear that something we control will twist and turn against us. These ideas have inspired a myriad of science fiction literature and films, one of them being Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. This dystopic science fiction novel delves into the subject of androids and what it means to be human. The novel was later adapted into a film in 1982, its name: *Blade Runner*. These works have a similar story arch, but some themes are approached differently, which leads to my thesis: “How are the androids depicted in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* versus in *Blade Runner*, and what effect does it have on the theme of empathy and humanity in the two versions?”

The text will be divided into five main sections including an introduction, a theoretical part, analysis, discussion and a conclusion. The introduction will introduce the central thesis and give a brief explanation of primary- and secondary literature. The theoretical part will give an insight into the literary works and theory that will be used, and how they are intended to be used in the analysis. The analysis will go over specific findings and delve into the distinctions of the two main works. The discussion part will aim to answer and discuss the thesis in light of the theory and analysis, including primary and secondary literature. For the concluding part, there will be a summary and a conclusion regarding the thesis. The text will also include subchapters which explain certain areas in the novel and film and how they approach the main themes differently. As the text is densely filled with the theme of androids, it is imperative that the reader get a comprehensive view of what an android is and its connection with monster theory.

The two main works that will be analysed and reviewed in this thesis is Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner*. The latter is an

adaptation of the novel but addresses the central themes differently, which will be analysed and discussed. In particular, how they portray the androids and why. Given that *Blade Runner* is an adaptation, it is only natural to look at the effects that the adaptation has had on the successful novel's story and themes. This will be done with the support of secondary literature. Using four different literature sources on adaptation, we get a broader view and different opinions. Discussing significant differences between the novel and film's storyline and themes, and their effect, it is imperative to understand the adaptation genre. Hutcheon & O'Flynn's *A Theory of Adaption*, Naremore's *Film Adaption*, Leitch's *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents* and Stam's *Literature and Film* will be used to find answers to why the adaptation has done their specific changes compared to the original work.

In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* the setting is a decaying and dystopic San Francisco, where the world has gone through a nuclear war. As a result, radiation has contaminated the Earth and caused degeneration in some humans, which if the case, the human will get categorised as a "special", which translate to a human with limited mental capacity and is considered a degraded human. Thus, many left Earth to immigrate to Mars where they were given android servants. Back on Earth, the majority of the population manipulate their emotions through an empathy box. They depend heavily on their technology, but at the same time strive to keep in touch with their humanity, which is an ongoing theme throughout the novel. In contrast, *Blade Runner's* setting is in a futuristic Los Angeles where androids, called replicants in the film, have escaped their colonies on Mars. Films have the drawback of a certain time limit, and thus, we lose many subplots. The effects of these cuts will be further discussed in the chapter on adaptation.

## 1.1 Method

In this text there are two main methods used, one being literary analysis and the second being film analysis. Given the thesis, there will also be a comparison of the two primary works and an analysis of how they approach themes differently, especially the theme of empathy and humanity. The two main works are of different platforms, so reviewing the differences will also be a method, with the supplementation of secondary literature on adaptation. In light of that, I chose to draw upon literature that felt fitting for this thesis. To explain and connect monsters into *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and *Blade Runner* I used Stephen Asma's *On monsters: An unnatural history of our worst fears*, Stephen Cohen's *Seven Theses* and Joseph Francavilla's chapter on *The Android as Doppelgänger*. Using several sources on monster theory, I tried to achieve a broad perspective and find relevant passages that described the monsters and their behaviour in the main works.

Furthermore, I drew upon four literary works on adaptation to achieve an expansive view on adaptation theory, as well as finding an explanation for their choices in adapting well-known source texts. I chose to use Naremore's *Film Adaption*, Hutcheon and O'Flynn's *A Theory of Adaption*, Leitch's *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents* and Stam's *Literature and Film*. These works do not specifically address the adaptation of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* but approaches the topics of fidelity and different form of film techniques which is relevant for my thesis.

## 2. Theory

### 2.1 Adaptation

Adaptations are found everywhere today; television, musicals, internet, novels and so on. One particular form of adaptation is quite frequently used: “borrowing”, “*here an artist employs, more or less extensively the material, idea, or form of an earlier, generally successful, text*” (Andrew, 2000, p. 30). Which in the case of *Blade Runner* being an adaptation of the successful novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (hereafter, *Do Androids Dream...*). This particular adaptation goes from a telling mode to showing mode which is very common. In this type of transformation; description, narration, and representation must be transcoded into speech, actions, sounds, and visual images (Hutcheon & O’Flynn, 2013, p. 40). Moreover, conflicts and ideological differences between characters must be made visible and audible (Hutcheon & O’Flynn, 2013, p. 40). There is a high emphasis on the visual perception, but the aural is just as important, as soundtracks can employ elements as voice-overs and music. These elements can help evoke specific moods and emotions in the viewer. In the case of *Blade Runner*, the soundtrack creates a mystical atmosphere and emotional reactions in the viewer. The soundtrack has a plethora of mystical and eerie sounds that supplement the visual representation of futuristic Los Angeles.

The quest for fidelity in adaptation has become a rarity (Leitch, 2007, p. 127). One of the main reasons for rarely achieving fidelity is because they rarely attempt it. Leitch further explains that “every case of attempted fidelity is exceptional not only because faithful adaptations are in the minority but because they are so likely to be different from another” (Leitch, 2007, p. 127). There arises another problem with novel adaptation, which is the dilemma of what to cut from the original work. Faithfully adapting a 200 pages novel into a two-hour film is an arduous task. The director has to compress scenes and drop characters to fit in the essential elements (Leitch, 2007, p. 129). Therefore, approaching the adaptation based on fidelity can be considered fruitless since some adaptations strive to convey something new. In light of that, *Blade Runner* is most constructive to be interpreted as an interpretation of the original text since it addresses the themes in the story differently.

The novel and film were released in two separate time periods. In light of that, the audience’s preferences might have changed over time. However, changing an original to the extent that it cannot be recognized for its source material is also a problem. Stam explains a complication



that arises when adapting a well-known source: “When we say an adaptation has been “unfaithful” to the original, the very violence of the term gives expression to the intense sense of betrayal we feel when a film adaptation fails to capture what we see as the fundamental narrative, thematic, or aesthetic features of its literary source” (Stam, 2005, p. 14). Directors and screenwriters have an arduous task to dissect hundreds of pages long novel to find the essential parts. To include everything would result in hours upon hours of film. If one were to faithfully adapt the whole of *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy the result would have been a thirty-hour film (Stam, 2005, p. 15).

On the other hand, a novel can have a plethora of possible readings, and thus, one choice of reading is not more right than another. Even though *Blade Runner* leaves out several subplots, it does so to include other parts to emphasise its themes. E.g. a much deeper insight into the androids. It is the combination of the writers and directors’ vision of the source text that comes to life in the adaptation. Deciding whether or not it is the right vision is futile since the text can be read many ways.

*Do Androids Dream...* has a very well described dystopian San Francisco. Replicating something as grand and technologically advanced as the reader might imagine is a tough task. Ridley Scott portrays the futuristic city as a blend of many cultures as one can see in one of the very first scenes of the film. There are Chinese signs, Japanese food, and a strange language spoken that is a blend of many languages called “Cityspeak”. Deckard explains it as following in the film: “That gibberish he talked was Cityspeak, gutter talk, a mishmash of Japanese, Spanish, German, what have you...” (Scott & Ford, 1982). This is a prime example of Scott taking the liberty to add something not included in the novel, and it does an excellent job to set the setting in the movie. Deckard, the main character in the film, is dull, dreary, and quite mechanical, resulting in it being hard to identify with him. The essence of humanity in the film is very much transparent in the humans, the traits that categorise humans are as we progress in the film transferred to the replicants. Which shows when one of androids displays more human traits than any other human in the film, the android named Baty displays rage, love, sorrow, revenge, empathy, humour, intelligence and morality (Francavilla, 1997, p. 14).

Ridley Scott uses a myriad of visual techniques to enhance or express themes or ideas. Especially in the camera work. The film is dark, often interrupted by objects. The close-shots of buildings and rooms make everything seem enclosed, a bit claustrophobic (Kerman, 1997, p. 19). The city itself is visually intrusive with many neon signs, advertisements, and loud

announcements carried out by large flying aircraft. These elements help create a tight and dystopic environment as well as create an eerie feeling in the viewer. *Blade Runner* uses voice-over as a way to convey certain bits of information that can be hard to pick up or other trivial information that serves no other purpose other than to give the viewer a more intimate relationship with the protagonist. Exemplified early in the movie when Deckard tells that he was an ex-cop and that his wife called him sushi. Two bits of information that gives us an insight into the character.

## 2.2 The Uncanniness of the Android

One of the oldest literary motifs is the double, also known as the Doppelgänger, and the android in science fiction is a modern variation of that. Twins, shadows and reflections in waters are some of the natural phenomena which early literature mythologised into figures of the double (Francavilla, 1997, p. 4). Furthermore, according to Francavilla, the double in literature is considered a manifestation of the phenomena known as *the uncanny* (1997, p. 4). This phenomenon derives from Sigmund Freud's essay titled *The Uncanny* (Asma, 2009, p. 188). He defines it as a feeling that is somewhat familiar but also foreign, in a sense, it is a form of dissonance between cognitive and emotion. The essay further delves into the dominant features of horror, one of them being evil doppelgängers.

Freud argues that the reason we fear the "evil double" is a thinly veiled desire to extend one's own life and to live on and never perish (Asma, 2009, p. 189). Reality reminds us daily that we and everyone we love will die, so the universal urge to live forever has to be repressed, and as you get older, the idea of immortality is repressed, but the craving has only gotten deeper rooted. In the case of the novel, the android can be seen as a double, projecting our misuse of technology. These doubles are indistinguishable in appearance from humans and can unnoticeably blend in amongst humans, which in result blurs the boundaries between hunter and hunted (Francavilla, 1997, p. 8). Additionally, creating a fear of being replaced by a perfect artificial life form.

The fear evoked by the uncanny similarities between the androids and humans can be seen as the humans feeling their loss of uniqueness, and thus their identity. This is a classic us-versus-them theme that Cohen delves into in his *Seven Theses* (1996). These androids, the "others", represents something post-human, and humans reflecting their fear of losing their humanness through technological advances.

Both in the novel and film, the androids are deprived of the right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. With the addition of implanted memories and a four-year lifespan, they are denied their capacity for development. Unable to replicate themselves, and even denied intercourse in the novel version, as it is forbidden by law. Additionally, their enslavement at off-world colonies projects the humans fear of replacement which was touched on in the preceding paragraph.

As Cohen explains in his paper on *Monster Culture (Seven Theses)*, the monster's body is a cultural body (1996, p. 4). It is an embodiment of the fear, anxieties, desires and fantasies of its time. In the literature of different eras, this is exemplified, such as the sea creature Kraken signifies a time when the depth of the ocean was still a mystery and exploration of the dark depths was yet to be done. However, in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream...* the verdict of who the monster is can be considered blurry since creating something so lifelike and conscious as an android, but then denying them the right to live and develop, instead, being enslaved by their creators. Furthermore, with a creation so similar to human there arises a new phenomenon called "uncanny valley", which derives from Sigmund Freud's *the uncanny*.

In the day and age of technology, computer animations and robotics, there has been a renewed interest in the uncanny, since the creation of virtual humans has stimulated new ways to feel strangely familiar and unfamiliar at the same time (Asma, 2009, p. 190). Japanese robotics Masahiro Mori noticed a phenomenon that he calls "uncanny valley". In this, he saw that humans show a feeling of empathy towards virtual protagonists, and the curve of empathy went upward to a certain point where characters still were humanoid in appearance, but not identical. When the illusion was very close, there occurred a drop-off in empathy (Asma, 2009, p. 191). Moreover, when the avatar was very close to human, but not quite exact, there arises a slight feeling of creepiness or strangeness. Which can be applied to *Blade Runner* in the sense that the androids do seem human, but there is something "off" about them, although they are not CGI characters in the film.

The idea of something uncanny brings up the theme of anxiety and fear of others. According to Asma, fear and anxiety are ubiquitous in humans (2011, p. 239). In addition, they are one of the most common emotions in our dreams. Being afraid is a given part of the human condition as well as suspicion towards what is different. Both the original and the adaptation touch upon the subject of fear and anxiety towards the unknown: namely the androids. They

do however approach it differently. The novel villainises the androids, and there is no considerable change of perception towards them as the novel progresses. One main reason for that is that we never see their point of view or thoughts. Nevertheless, as the novel progresses, the idea that empathy is the defining factor for what is human is cast aside. We see both humans and androids lacking empathy, but also some displaying it. The author might indicate that empathy is not something inevitably human.

### 3. Analysis

#### 3.1 Major distinctions between original and adaptation

The original novel and its adaptation share several similarities, but even more, differences. The setting, characters and basic plotline is where the resemblance shines the most, but the story arch differs. Considering an adaptation has a certain time limit there is bound to be something cut from the original. It is a hard choice for the filmmaker to choose what to keep and what to cut, which was touched on in the adaption chapter. As previously mentioned, the characters are similar, and our main protagonist is Rick Deckard. In the novel, he is described as a regular bounty hunter, who has a gradual character development throughout the novel, while in the film Deckard is a retired bounty hunter who is brought back to hunt escaped androids. The sense of fragility in Deckard is mostly transparent in the movie, while in the novel, we see the despair that Deckard shows when hunting and retiring the androids. The sense of character description is arguably easier in a novel where one can describe in detail the characters and their feelings. While in a movie they are dependent on showing the character through images and dialogue, however, less dialogue compared to a novel on the basis that a movie only has around 2 hours to convey the plot. Moreover, in order to dramatize a novel, it has to be distilled, reduced in size, and thus, inevitably, complexity (Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013, p. 36). These cuts are often criticised, but at the same time when plots are condensed and concentrated, they can become more powerful (Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013, p. 36).

In the case of *Blade Runner*, some side plotlines are cut, such as Mercerism: a religious cult, and the empathy machine. These side plots are essential in conveying the theme of empathy and sense of reality in the novel. However, the film approaches the themes differently, thus are not essential. Each character in the novel deals with empathy in some way or another and the categorisation of what is considered human is through displaying empathy. Furthermore,

Deckard learns that androids may be capable of empathy towards other androids, which blurs the line between living and non-living. With the decision to cut out the two subplots of Mercerism and empathy boxes the theme of reality disappears. In the novel, Mercerism makes us question what is real. This is exemplified in the chapter when the leader of Mercerism, a man called Mercer merges into Deckard's world and at that point, the reader is questioning both the sanity and reality of Deckard's life.

## 3.2 The Portrayal of the Android

Androids, a humanoid robot, so visually like ourselves it becomes chilling. In *Do Androids Dream...* we have to visualise for ourselves what the androids look like, while in *Blade Runner* we have the androids visualised on screen. Through both narration and visualisation, the chilling conception of something so close to a human one cannot see the difference do provoke an eerie feeling. As the thesis explains, the central exploration is the understanding and depiction of the androids in the two different platforms. However, we find some similar thematic elements in both the original and the adaptation but handled differently. Both take on the moral question of whether it is right to create people who have no free will. Which is a subject we find in other science fiction novels, such as *Brave New World*. In an age of genetic engineering this concept is closer than one might think, and as it stands, the novel and film's moral question is very much still relevant.

The perfect servant is the description given for the androids. If we see the fugitive androids as malfunctioning machines, as is thought by Deckard, then the killing of them can be seen as morally neutral (Kerman, 1997, p. 22). However, if we see the androids as rebelling slaves, their killing of humans is comprehensible and even understandable. In this segment, the source novel and film differ. The novel does not try to build empathy towards the androids; instead, they are seen as malicious, as exemplified when Pris rips out the legs of a spider, one by one. While in the film, there is a build-up of empathy towards the androids, and it strongly suggests that the androids should inhabit the same rights as humans. The dilemma of the androids' rights and privileges are present in both the novel and film. Moreover, if the creation is virtually identical as the creator, should not the creation have the same rights and privileges as the creator? (Gwaltney, 1997, p. 32). We find the presence of moral wrongness in the protagonist in both novel and film. Moreover, as Deckard progresses through the story and gets to know the androids, he is less able to distinguish the difference between androids and humans. Furthermore, the meeting with Rachael, who is an android that does not know

what she is, there is a feeling of sympathy as she goes through an identity crisis finding out the truth. A harrowing and humane experience.

When it comes to the difference in android portrayal, the android Roy Baty is a prime example. His last name differs from the two versions, but for the simplicity of the text, the original name is used for explaining him in both versions. In the novel, he is characterised as an intimidating, frightening figure who feels no remorse about killing humans. In the film, however, he has a deeper motive than just surviving, as well developing into a sympathetic character (Gwaltney, 1997, p. 33). Further on in the film, we understand his cruelty as it is a human reaction to the existential situation of his imminent death, and the death of the ones he loves. We do find the novel's Baty displaying human emotions, for example, when his wife dies: "he cries out in anguish" (Dick, 2010, p. 177). Both the novel and film raise the question of what it means to be human, and what criteria lie under the term "human". Biologically, the androids can be considered human, although they are not sexually produced, they do however fall under the category of "homo sapiens", as the word derives from Latin, and means "wise man" ("homo sapiens", n.d.). Both the novel and film portray the androids as intelligent beings. A fascinating question arises from the changes done to Baty: why was it done?

The two versions of Roy Baty share several qualities, he is a leader, highly intelligent, and even quite philosophical. With the novel's explanations of the androids, we are left with a description of coldness, uncanniness, and a lack of empathy. Their only concern is their survival. With the further description of Baty having an air of "almost deliberate vulgarity" (Dick, 2010, p. 153), there arises an us-versus-them theme where the android function as a dangerous unknown capable of murder. Resulting in the reader feeling little to no remorse for the androids. On the other hand, in the film, we can see a justification for the android's killings. As exemplified in the scene where Baty is to confront his creator, Tyrell. It is a climactic moment, and the camera angle is heavily focused on Baty resulting in seeing the true despair of killing his father. The scene displays Baty's tortured face, and we can see that it hurts him, thus breaking the illusion of androids lacking empathy. Moreover, the androids in the film seem nearly divine, superhuman, while in the novel, they are portrayed as fragile, cruel and heartless. As a result of this, compassion towards the androids differs significantly in the two versions.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Dehumanisation of the Android

In *Do Androids Dream...*, Dick depicts an artificial creation so utterly matched to humans in appearance the only way to tell the difference is to use a test called the Voight-Kamff empathy-measuring test. This machine can read emotion levels when a person is asked a series of questions. The questions vary, but they all should provoke a sudden spike of emotion if the subject is human. For example: “You are watching an old movie on TV, a movie before the war. It shows a banquet in progress; the entrée consists of boiled dog, stuffed with rice” (Dick, 2010, p. 82). The android would not show any sign of emotion to this particular question, if so, the bounty hunter has the right to kill the android, or “retire” as it is called both in the novel and the film adaptation.

The dehumanisation of the androids can be compared to our world’s dehumanisation through slavery, colonialism, racial inequality. Presenting something as less human to justify the horrid conditions put upon them. As Asma explains, when something is portrayed as different it brings out a suspicion in us (2009, p. 238). Moreover, us-versus-them thinking comes relatively easy for humans. When the perception of the otherness is monstrous, it brings out a monstrous part in ourselves (Asma, 2009, p. 239). In the case of *Do Androids Dream...* and *Blade Runner* the androids have a less than human value, and the only thing qualifying something as a human is the demonstration of empathy. Even though, several characters in the novel portray little to no empathy, e.g. Phil Resch, who retire androids without any show of empathy towards them. With the lack of empathy in the human characters, it obscures the conception of what is considered “human” when the term has become nothing more than if something is worthy of existence. They are defined as humans by their level of empathy, but ironically the character Isidore who exhibits the most empathy is degraded as less human because of minimum mental capacity (Palumbo, 2013, p. 1280). In result, the two defining factors towards defining a human in the society contradict one another. This irony is also found in *Blade Runner*, however, a bit subtler. There is a lack of empathy in most of the characters in the film, exemplified when Deckard tries to shoot an android in a crowded mass of people without the slightest regard for safety. However, without the subplot of the empathy machine, the irony is not emphasised as much as in the novel.

## 4.2 Humanity and Empathy

In *Do Androids Dream...*, the author explores how the boundaries between man and machine become blurred, and the quintessential question of *what is human?* arises. This particular question hangs over every chapter, and even though the novel does not explicitly reveal the answer, it does give subtle hints. As mentioned, the Voigt-Kampff test distinguished humans from androids by measuring empathic reactions to various questions of emotional situations. In these, the humans should display empathy, feeling a connection to the ones in the hypothetical situation, while the androids show no response. Empathy is such a grand theme in the novel, yet the characters show so little of it that it becomes ironic. If we take the main protagonist, Deckard, and his wife, Iran, they are very distant with each other, and with the usage of the empathy machine, the irony is further emphasised. Humans in the novel flock around the idea of empathy, and how it is the uniting factor for what is human. The idea of humanity puts them above everything else, especially androids. The author, Philip K. Dick plays with the idea that humans are connected through the religion of Mercerism. The members grip an empathy box which enables them to experience the feelings and sensations of other humans. Furthermore, the machine acts as a reminder for the humans that they have a collective identity, without it, the line between human and android become even more blurred.

*Blade Runner* does not include the empathy box or Mercerism as the film address the theme of empathy and humanity slightly different. The film has a different story arch for the androids. As the film progresses, we get glimpses of androids expressing emotions and showing empathy. Furthermore, with the addition of implanted memories and a four-year lifespan, the androids are arrested at the threshold of maturity, not capable to fully evolve (Francavilla, 1997, p. 10). Both Rachael and Baty are turning points for Deckard. Rachael in the sense that he expresses deep love and empathy for her, and Baty showing how it is to live in fear, like a slave. Resulting in him quitting as a Blade Runner and running away with Rachael. The film gives the viewer a more intimate relation to the android by showing a deeper insight in the androids' actions and personal motivation. Baty starts as a classic villain, hiding in the shadows, but in ways shows more humanity and nobleness than many humans in the film. He becomes Deckard's saviour when he is dangling from the roof, showing compassion and empathy towards someone that repeatedly have tried to kill him and his loved ones. The distinction between humans and androids become even blurrier towards the end and a role reversal happens throughout the film where the characteristics of what is considered



human become more attributed to the artificial life. Thus, Tyrell's slogan of "more human than human" becomes a fitting description.

Where the novel characterises the androids as cold, mechanical and evil, the film reverses the roles, and the androids become more human than humans. Then again, the humans in the novel are trying to understand what is human but come up empty-handed. In the end, there is not a simple answer to what is human, neither film nor novel manages to answer it completely. However, we find a critical theme in both: they are trying to understand what is human. One of them, Deckard, in both novel and film goes through a myriad of situations that shape him towards the end. His character change varies slightly between the versions. In the novel, we see Deckard gradually processing what it means to be human, e.g. when interacting with Phil Resch, another bounty hunter, who shows no empathy when killing/retiring androids. Deckard, on the other hand, starts to feel more and more compassion towards the androids after meeting Rachael, who seems so lifelike. His gradual change of opinion towards androids come after the retiring of Luba Luft, an android opera singer; "I can't anymore; I've had enough. She was a wonderful singer. The planet could have used her. This is insane" (Dick, 2010, p. 108). Nevertheless, Deckard continues retiring the remaining androids, with little compassion towards them, even when the androids clearly display emotional responses towards each other.

The novel and film approach the climatic end fight between Deckard and the remaining androids very differently. In the novel, the fight is anti-climactic, as Deckard has little to no trouble finishing them off and is motivated only by being finished with it all. On the other hand, the film plays out the climactic fight much longer and has a more significant role regarding the theme of empathy. Deckard enters an abandoned apartment complex, and within one, the androids are hiding. After a long fight scene, one of the androids, Pris, dies, sprawling around on the floor, blood gushing. A very gruelling scene, in which the viewer feels an urge to look away. When Baty finds her, we see his hands shaking, voice cracking, and even tears. A very heartfelt moment in which the viewer feels compassion and empathy towards the androids. An interesting point to mention is the characters facial expression, he seems sad but at the same time not able to understand his emotions. As they are at a four-year lifespan, they are never fully able to develop and understand what they feel. In result, Baty lets out a howl, a very animalistic and sad howl, as if becoming in touch with his most primal instincts including the instinct for survival. He knows his time is up but clings to everything that symbolises life, e.g. a white dove.

As mentioned earlier, Baty saves Deckard from death at the very last moment. It is hard to say whether he did it to keep the memory of himself alive since everybody who knew him had already died and if Deckard dies the memory of Baty dies with him as well. On the other hand, one can see that Baty accepts his death peacefully, and wants to leave a mark in existence, showing that he understands the value of life, and what it means to be “good”. If we interpret it this way, the whole narrative flips and the former perception of the villain has now become that he is a victim of a system that never gave him a chance.

Both versions approach the theme of empathy or lack thereof in some circumstances. The movie gradually flips the way we perceive the androids, as gruelling machines at the start, to troubled victims of a system that gave them no chance. The novel, on the other hand, is more situated around what it means to be human, and that empathy is not an automatic factor in humans, and some are even incapable of showing it, while others try.

One can see the android resort to cruelty and murder to achieve their means, but if we place a human in an equivalent situation, without their basic needs, humans will most likely act similarly. This can demonstrate, if humanity would be reduced to their true nature, they are naturally cruel and vicious, as the animalistic survival instinct is found in everyone. The novel depicts that the line between humans and androids is the display of empathy, but ironically humans are nearly dependent on the mood organ to feel empathy and emotions. The author plays with the idea that empathy is not something humans are inevitably born with, but rather something that has to be learned.

## 5. Conclusion

“It’s obvious that every effort is being made in these years to replicate a human being and forge armies of them. It might take two-centuries, but it does seem to be what we humans are hell-bent on doing” – *Norman Mailer* (Asma, 2009, p. 255).

As a species, we fear the unknown, the other. The author Philip K. Dick sets us in a dystopic world where technology has gotten so far: we have intelligent androids, who in turn can develop what we call human capabilities, such as empathy, which is a grand theme in both *Do Androids Dream...* and *Blade Runner*. The human race clings to their idea that they are superior and wants to sustain what is “pure” human. It shows the contemporary fear of an

altered human species, something post-human. The novel *Do Androids Dream...* portrays androids as cold and emotionless, but at the same time, the humans show little empathy and emotion, especially our protagonist, Deckard. The question of what is human becomes crucial as the line between the androids and humans become even thinner. With the inclusion of bounty hunters, who retire androids, we see the humans attempt to reassert their dominance and deny the androids their right for development. This idea of empathy being the uniting element for humans are quickly seen as ironic when they are dependent on an empathy machine to punch in what emotions to feel. E.g. “My schedule for today lists a six-hour self-accusatory depression, Iran said” (Dick, 2010, p. 2).

With an adaptation of an original, there are bound to be some changes done, since ordinarily, they are of two different formats. *Blade Runner* keeps the skeleton of the story but changes how they approach different themes. As well as the portrayal of the androids. We come to find that the androids have a fragility to them, compared to the cold, hard androids in the novel. In the film, they mourn their loved ones and fight for their right to existence.

The two versions approach the theme of humanity and empathy slightly different but land at a similar conclusion. In the end part of the novel, Deckard finds some connection with nature when finding what he believes is a real toad in the desert and a deep empathy towards Mercer when he merges with him in the earlier passages. Even with this merger, he does not have a grand epiphany, we are instead left with a sort of meaninglessness. On the other hand, he seems to respect and see the value of all life, even those that are not classified as “real life”. The film lands on a similar conclusion but addresses it differently. With the climactic moment of Baty’s death and his mercy towards Deckard, which results in him transforming from a cold and emotionless bounty hunter to someone that can see life in artificial life. Exemplified in one of the last scenes with Rachael, where they seemingly escape from the dystopic town, even though she is an android. Both the novel and film’s Deckard learn the value of life through the androids. The humans have lost touch with themselves, and in the case of the novel cling to their empathy boxes for a sense of unity between themselves. We see to understand the actions of the androids in the film; they are arrested at the threshold of maturity and cornered in, like animals. In result, they lash out, desperate for their freedom. Regardless, the humans see the artificial machines as others, and strongly resist them. This idea of *otherness* is persistent throughout both the novel and book, despite Deckard’s revelation at the end of both versions.

There arises a myriad of fascinating questions when debating about future technology and artificial life. One can see it as mere science fiction, but it may be a reality in the coming decades. Both *Do Androids Dream...* and *Blade Runner* brings up the question of morality in the creation of life, even though there is no single great answer. What was considered science fiction in the seventies might transform into reality in our near future and place humankind in dangerous predicaments.

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